Volume 13 MARCH, 1954 Number 3

THE BLUE GEESE FLY NORTH

FISHERIES PROGRAM FOR 1954

By Kenneth M. Madden
Superintendent of Fisheries

Like Gaul, Iowa's fisheries program is divided into 3 parts. Natural and man-made factors in Iowa have developed three broad fishing areas in the state: The northwest or natural lake area, the southern and central area containing artificial lakes, city reservoirs, and turbid catfish streams, and the northeasfern area of clear trout, smallmouth bass and catfish streams.

Each of the areas calls for a particular type of fisheries management. The Conservation Commission's Fisheries program for 1954 is designed to increase game fishing by supplementing favorable natural conditions in these 3 areas.

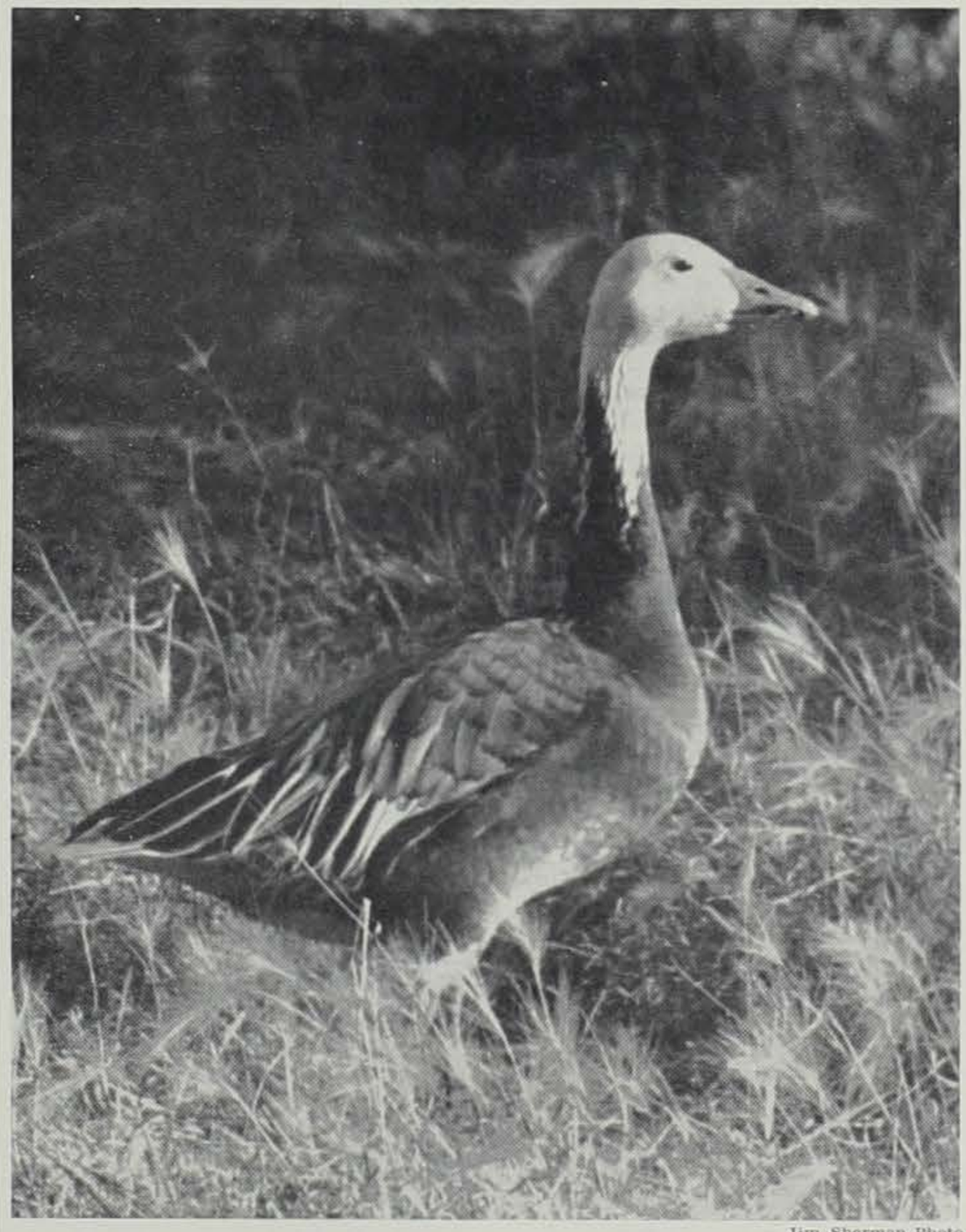
Iowa's rich shallow lakes and adjoining marshes are capable of producing tremendous annual fish crops. The 30 permanent rough fish traps and seasonal seining have but one purpose—to reduce competition for game fish so that they will grow faster, bigger and make better fishing.

Last year over 1,600,000 pounds of "weed" fish were removed and if conditions are favorable we expect a similar removal in 1954.

Coordinated with rough fish control, northern pike fry are stocked in sloughs, adjacent to the lakes, where they can grow with less competition from undesirable species. Later they are allowed to return to the lake. Adult northern pike removed from the rough fish traps also are placed in the slough areas. Such northern pike management has demonstrated that this valuable predator species can be increased. Every suitable area will be used for this purpose, which will help to control species balance in the parent lake as well as providing more recreation for the angler.

Walleyed pike fry stocking is general in the open water lakes region of Northwest Iowa and fol-

(Continued on page 24)



Jim Sherman Photo.

"An old blue goose raised his head from a meal of three-square grass and stretched his wings in the warm Louisiana sun."

PHEASANT COUNTS AND DEWFALL

By Eugene D. Klonglan
Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit
Department of Zoology and Entomology
Iowa State College

Research workers in Palestine probably never dreamed that their discoveries might prove useful in determining the year-to-year status of Iowa's ring-necked pheasants. However, recent studies in Winnebago County indicate that the work of these men on the other side of the world will be valuable in making more accurate estimates of rises or falls in our pheasant population.

Since 1936, the fall roadside census has been a major method of determining the relative number of birds that Iowa's pheasant hunters will have to shoot at on opening day, and how many days they can shoot at them. However, the number of birds seen on the roadside counts is influenced by such factors as weather, changing cover conditions and daily and season timing of the counts.

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By John Madson
Education Assistant

An old blue goose raised his head from a meal of three-square grass and stretched his wings in the warm Louisiana sun. Nearby, others of his kind were launching themselves into the air, and the gander rose to join them. For nearly an hour they wheeled together above the wet pastures of *paille des oies* before they settled down again to resume their feeding.

A restlessness had been growing among them and more and more they left on short flights, each longer than the one before. It was early the last day of February, and songbirds were building nests and the days were becoming longer and hotter. Still the geese remained, as if they knew that their distant nesting grounds were bound by winter, and that blizzards still raged on Baffin Island.

Then, one day in early March, the blue goose left the marshes of the Sabine Refuge and joined a large band of geese near the Bayou Constance. Two other huge Louisiana flocks were also forming, one above the flats east of the Mississippi's mouth and another near March Island; the *Chenier du Tigre*.

These three great flocks, with an honor guard of snow geese, rose a thousand feet above the Louisiana tidal marshes and turned into the north. They settled to a pace of less than 50 miles an hour, but their flight was steady and in a direct line across the face of a continent.

They were joined by sparkling flocks of lesser snow geese, swinging up from their wintering grounds on the gulf coast of Texas and western Louisiana.

Up the great chute of the Mississippi Valley the birds flew, their flocks overtaking early pintails, mallards and a few Canada geese.

Through western Arkansas they flew, continuing to fly night and day. They made their way over western Missouri, where they found and followed the coffee-colored bends of the "Big Muddy" . . . Missouri River.

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Iowa Conservationist

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MUZZLE LOADERS

When I first made inquiries regarding the proper charge to use in my muzzleloading rifle, I was told the age-old method of placing the ball in the palm of the hand and pouring the powder over it until the shot was completely covered. I soon discovered that this might produce a kick like that of a Missouri mule or it might feel like the slap of a canary's wing, all depending upon whether the palm was flat or cupped.

A method which comes far closer to perfection is to use one grain of powder for each calibre of ball. For instance, a .58 ball would require 58 grains of powder. And, when I say powder, I mean black powder, not the modern fast-burning smokeless varieties.

Since smokeless powder burns much faster than black powder an equivalent amount of it creates more breach pressure as it is fired. The steel in these old guns is much softer than that used in modern rifles, consequently they can't stand as heavy a load. A smokeless powder charge equal to the correct black powder load not only could blow the rifle apart, but also could seriously harm the shooter.

When a charge of black powder goes off, a belch of flame and a cloud of smoke is ejected from the muzzle. The smoke is so thick that, in order to see what you hit, you must drop down and peer under the smoke.

Briefly, these are the steps necessary in firing a round of shot. First, the powder is measured and poured down the bore. Then the ball is wrapped in a piece of cloth, trimmed, and forced down through the muzzle until gently seated on the powder charge. Next, if the gun is a percussion rifle, the nipple is primed and a cap slipped over it. The rifle is now ready to be fired.

Muzzleloading rifles serve a multiple purpose. They are, like the canoe, a link with the past which almost everyone likes to enjoy in one way or another. Also, they teach the fundamentals of handloading.

Probably the most important lesson that these old weapons teach is to make one shot and only one shot do the job. Too often, users of automatic arms, and I am one of them, find themselves relying on the second and third shots rather than putting everything into one accurate discharge.

Whatever motivates its use, there is no doubt—shooting muzzle-loading rifles is a fascinating game.—*Boone News Republican.*

MINNE ESTEMA FISHING ACCESS

The State Conservation Commission has approved purchase of 60 acres of Benton County land in an area known as Minne Estema about six miles north of Vinton, for $3,000, according to Dr. D. T. Smith, of Vinton, President of the Red Cedar Chapter of the Izaak Walton League.

Smith said the area will guarantee public access to the Cedar River in the north Benton County area and will likely be used as a wildlife area by the state.

The Izaak Walton group has been active in attempting to get the state board to purchase the land. The group had earlier acted to halt a request that the recreational area be closed to the public.

The Minne Estema area includes about a quarter of a mile of scenic shoreline along the Cedar River.

The property is owned by Miss Esther Knapp of Vinton.—*Vinton Times.*

1954 FISHING REGULATIONS

The State Conservation Commission has announced the 1954 Iowa fishing regulations, which include several liberalized changes.

Among these changes are the addition of trout and perch to the "continuous open season" list and the setting of several catch limits so that the possession limit is twice that of the daily catch limit. This will permit limit catches for two consecutive days before the possession limit is reached, permitting week-end anglers to make the most of their two-day holiday.

The following regulations were effective March 1, 1954:

	INLAND WATERS OF THE STATE				BOUNDARY WATERS
Kind of Fish	Open Season	Daily Catch Limit	Possession Limit*	Minimum Length or Weight	Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and Inland Waters of Lee County
Sheepshead, Red Horse, Suckers, Gizzard Shad, Mooneye, Goldeye, Carp, Buffalo, Quillback, Carpsuckers, Gar, Dogfish, Eel, Burbot, Chubs	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters
Bullheads	Continuous	25	50	None	Continuous open season with no catch or possession limit
Catfish (Except Bullheads)	April 15-Nov. 30	8	16	None	Continuous open season with no catch or possession limit
Trout—all species	Continuous 5 a.m.-9 p.m. daily	8	8	None	Same as inland waters
Minnows	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters
Frogs (Except Bullfrogs)	May 12-Nov. 30	4 doz.	8 doz.	None	Same as inland waters
Bullfrogs (Rana Catesbeiana	May 12-Nov. 30	1 doz.	1 doz.	None	Same as inland waters
Walleye (Yellow Pike-Perch) or Sauger	May 15-Feb. 15	5	10	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season
Crappie, Yellow Bass, Warmouth Bass, Sunfish, Bluegill, Perch	Continuous	15	30	None	Same as inland waters
White or Silver Bass	May 15-Feb. 15	15	30	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season
Northern Pike	May 15-Feb. 15	4	8	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season
Smallmouth Bass	May 30-Feb. 15	5	10	10″	Same as inland waters except season May 2-Feb. 15
Largemouth Bass	May 30-Feb. 15	5	10	10″	Same as inland waters except season May 2-Feb. 15
Rock Bass	May 30-Feb. 15	15	30	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season
Rock Sturgeon, Paddlefish	Aug. 1-Nov. 30	15	30	5 lbs.	Same as inland waters
Sand Sturgeon	Aug. 1-Nov. 30	15	30	1 lb.	Same as inland waters

* Not to exceed more than fifty (50) fish of all kinds in the aggregate, except that this aggregate possession limit shall not apply to fish named in this table on which there is no *daily* catch limit.

Fishermen are reminded that 1953-54 fishing licenses expire March 31. Iowa fishing licenses are required of all males 16 years of age and over. Iowa fishing licenses are required of all females 16 years of age or over *only* for fishing in state-owned lakes.

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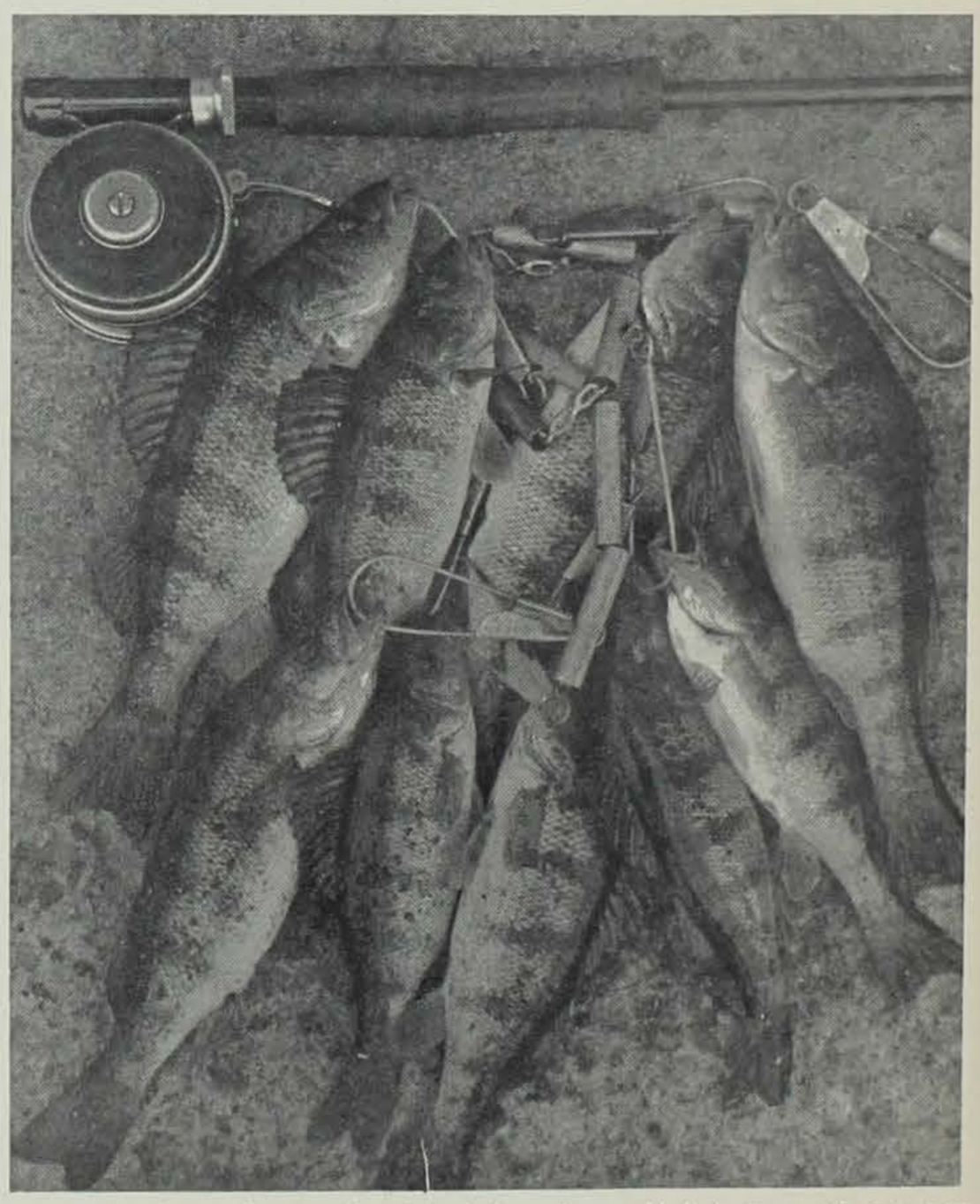
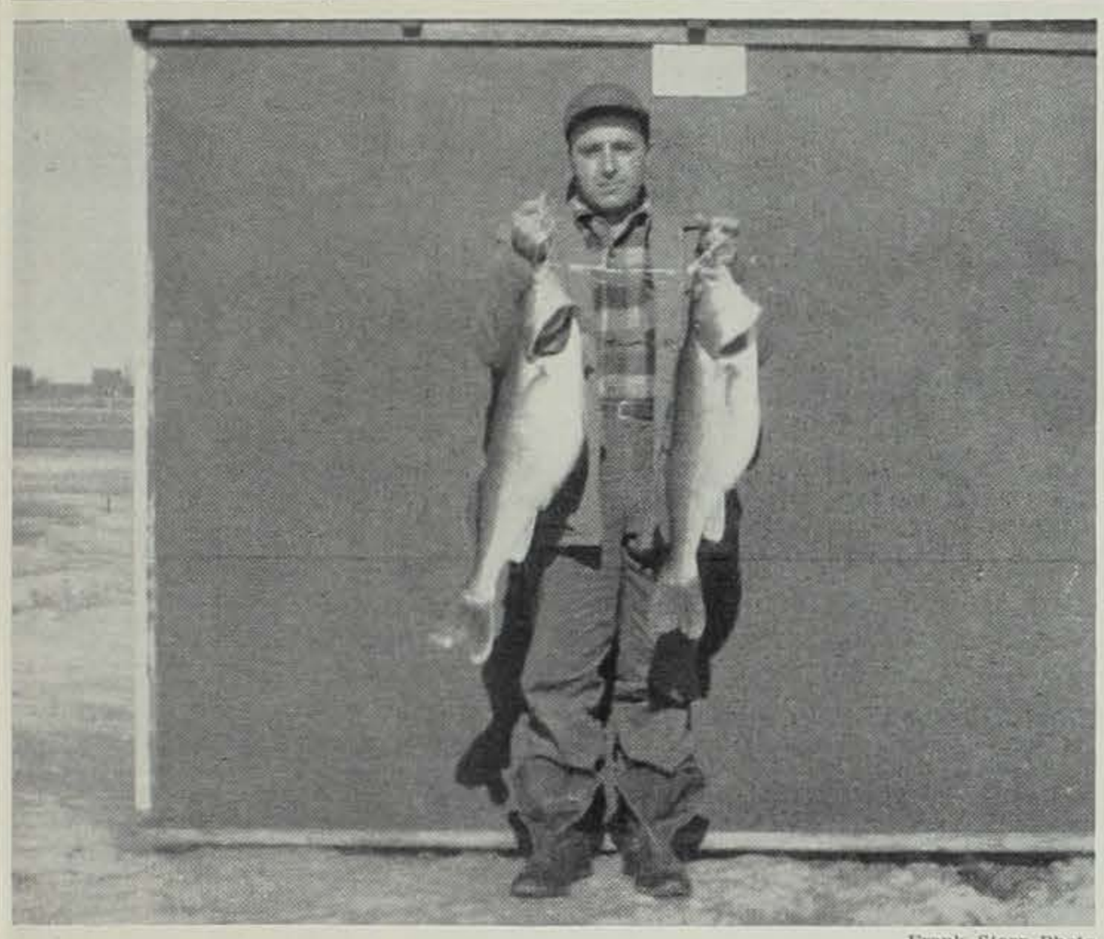


For the first time yellow perch and trout have been added to the continuous open season list.



Frank Starr Photo.
Walleyes that make Storm Lake famous. Shorty Lawrance displays 12 pound, 12 ounce and 10 pound winter caught walleyes.

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STORM LAKE ICE ANGLING BOOMED

Although ice fishing activity on Storm Lake has been increasing in recent years, it is still low considering the big fish and good fishing that's been going on there.

Frank Starr, Conservation Officer for Cherokee and Buena Vista counties, writes that the winter fishing in Storm Lake was as good or better than that in the fall, and that more lunker walleyes were taken from under the ice than at any other time last year.

Fishing did not get underway until January, for dangerous ice conditions kept ice fishermen from the major walleye areas of the lake. During January the west end of the lake produced the best pike fishing, possibly because of the attraction of many small fish in the inlet channnel.

The best fishing hours seemed to be from 5 p. m. until midnight in five feet of water, although some nice catches were taken in deeper water during the day. Most of the fishermen used chubs when available, and used the chubs hooked through the lips. Some anglers had good luck using two or more minnows on a hook.

According to Starr, there was a total of 35 fishing shacks on the ice of Storm Lake with the rest of the anglers watching their lines from cars. The car fishermen consistently brought in better catches than those in fishing shacks.

During February the fishing activity shifted to the east end of the lake and Schaller's Point. Many fine catches were brought in from that area during the day, but Schaller's Point was best at night when walleyes moved into shallow water.

Starr also reported several records of catches, among which were the largest Storm Lake walleyes of the season:

Dr. Robert Potter
Storm Lake, Iowa
89 walleyes during winter fishing
January 4—8½ pound walleye, also one 6¾ pounds
January 7—9½ pound walleye
Cleo and Attlee Hays
Storm Lake, Iowa
75 walleyes, largest 7½ pounds taken in January
Pete Kruse, Marathon, Iowa
Eppo Kruse, Marathon, Iowa
John Kruse, Marathon, Iowa
80 walleyes, largest 5 pounds 13 ounces
Elwood Spooner
Storm Lake, Iowa
January 4—10 pounds 5 ounce walleye
131 walleyes
Clayton Daniels
January 7—10½ pound walleye
Herb Heim
Sac City, Iowa
10½ pound walleye and 9 pound walleye
Shorty Lawrance
Storm Lake, Iowa
February 9—12 pound 12 ounce walleye and 10 pound walleye
Frank Spooner
February 18—7½ pound walleye

Shootable surpluses of prairie chickens are found today in the north and west, beyond the range where these birds were first found by the early settlers. The other "prairie grouse," the sharptail, is found today within the original known boundaries of its early day range.—E.S.

THE PHEASANTS' FRIEND

Pictured below is a mounted pheasant flushing bar that was made by the men at Northern Natural's booster station, according to plans furnished by the Iowa Conservation Commission. The flushing bar, cut down according to scale, is mounted on a miniature tractor furnished by Soll Implement Company. The tractor and flusher are being shown in the Times window now.

The flusher, mounted on a farmer's tractor at mowing time, is designed to arouse the pheasant before they are crippled or killed by the razor-like cutting bar of the mower. The weights, hung on cables, will drag through or hit down on the hay or grass being cut and in most cases flush out the nesting pheasant that will otherwise sit all the tighter if it is frightened by the noise of the approaching tractor and mower.

The hope of the commission, of the men at Northern that built the model, and of all who are concerned by the declining number of pheasants, is that farmers will construct one of the simply made devices and mount it on their tractor at haying time.

During the time the model has been at the Times office no farmer has ever discussed it with the writer without commenting on the appalling number of pheasant, especially hens, that are murdered by the fast-moving mower bar. There has never been anything the farmer could do, however, until a flusher was devised. This one is quite simply made and blueprints are available at the pipeline booster station and at the Times office. Not a great deal of material would be required and it could be built in the average farm shop in a short time this winter. If a great many were made for use this summer it should make an appreciable difference in the number of pheasants, come November 11.—*Paullina Times.*

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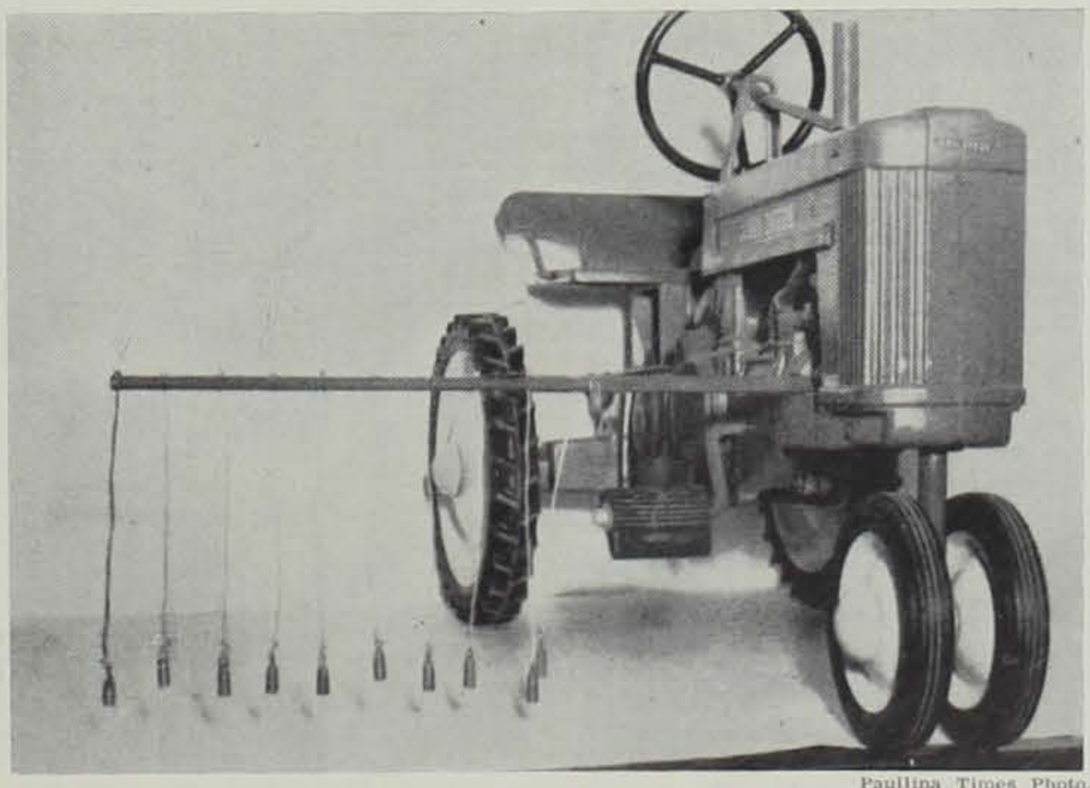

Paullina Times Photo.
The flushing bar mounted on a tractor at mowing time is designed to arouse the pheasant before they are crippled or killed by the cutting bar of the mower.

WARDENS' TALES

While flying patrol near Avoca during deer season, Commission Pilot Frank Heidelbauer noticed a hunter crouching in a fence corner near a road intersection. The hunter was watching a deer standing in an open field about five hundred yards away.

As Frank flew low over the area, he noticed a herd of 32 deer, running single file, approaching over some low hills behind the hunter. The first inkling that the nimrod had of the herd was when a deer leaped over the fence and landed about five feet away from

him. As the startled hunter swung on the deer with his gun he was distracted by a second deer leaping the fence behind him. He swung on the second deer, changed his mind, and fired at the first, which was now about thirty yards away. While he was doing this the herd, each deer following the one before him over the fence, was passing nearly within arms length of the hunter.

He fired three times, (evidently from a plugged gun), and missed. The deer continued to leap almost over him, and he emptied his magazine three times at the fleeing animals. Then, as Frank still watched from above, the last of the 32 deer disappeared over the horizon.

The hunter carefully leaned his shotgun in the fence corner, stepped a few feet out into the field, took his cap from his head and slammed it into the ground as hard as he could.

Floyd Morley, veteran conservation officer of Worth and Winnebago, almost arrested a cake last fall.

Floyd was on pheasant patrol near the little town of Rake when he saw a slow-moving car cross the Minnesota line and drive down a side road. Thinking it was a road hunter, Floyd followed far behind to keep the driver from seeing his official plates.

The other car kept to side roads, where it would slow down to five miles per hour in low spots and speed up on the better roads. Through his binoculars Morley

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"In our opinion the kid who spends his time fishing is unlikely to become a juvenile delinquent."

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HUMAN CONSERVATION

By R. W. Eschmeyer
Executive Vice-President, Sport Fishing Institute

The newspapers comment more and more on juvenile delinquency. It's a growing problem.

In addition to the weakening of moral fiber, there seems to be a lowering in the physical fitness of our youth. Here is part of an editorial appearing in *The Washington Post:*

"Now comes a report that American children came out second to European youngsters in a physical fitness test. This study, according to the *Journal of the American Association for Health and Recreation,* was made of 4,458 American children, aged 6 to 19, from urban and suburban communities, and of 1,987 European children of similar ages and backgrounds in less industrialized regions of Italy and Austria. The Americans failed 78.3 per cent of the tests, the Europeans only 8.3 per cent.

"The authors of the study, Dr. Hans Kraus and Ruth P. Hirshland of the New York University-Bellevue Medical Center, attribute the physical facility of the European children to the fact they 'do not have the benefit of a highly mechanized society; they do not use cars, school buses, elevators or any other labor-saving devices. They must walk everywhere. Their recreation is largely based on the active use of their own bodies.'

". . . Yet this (the U. S.) is a country where vitamins are abundant, sports seemingly everyone's concern. However, the intake of both is becoming more and more passive. People get the one at the drug store, the other on the television screen or from the bleachers. This is poor preparation for any emergency that requires physical stamina. Both home and school are faced with the need to get youngsters off their seats and onto their feet."

In our opinion, the kid who spends his spare time fishing is unlikely to become a juvenile delinquent. Furthermore, if his fishing involves considerable exertion, he will tend to be a fit individual physically. The kid who has learned to enjoy fishing, and who frequently engages in this form of recreation, is also doing something worthwhile for his future. He will be better equipped later to face the highly complicated life of a "civilized" adult.

School officials might well ponder the problem. A fishing trip for the class (under the guise of "nature," "general science," or something else, if need be) would do the youngsters immensely more good than they would get from learning that the Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066.

We sportsmen might well ponder the same problem. We can contribute toward a better future by the pleasant and almost effortless activity of taking a kid along on our fishing trips. It will help the kid. It will help you, too. There's nothing more satisfying than knowing that we have been of some benefit to others.

Of course, we adults need to go fishing, too. The shift, in a few generations, from a "physical" to a "mental" way of life is taking its toll. Nervous tension, and the diseases resulting from it, are making heavy inroads on our health despite medical advances. Keeping up with the Joneses, or getting ahead of them if possible, has become a nerve-wracking affair.

In the *Korean Information Bulletin* for January (issued by the Korean Embassy in Washington) the Ambassador, Dr. You Chan Yang, a good friend of the United States, gives us an opportunity to see ourselves as others see us. Here are a few paragraphs from his statement:

"I never saw a people who are always in such a hurry. This is especially obvious in the big cities. Motor cars are driven too rapidly. Streetcars clang and buses honk at the slightest delay. People walk down the streets with long strides and intent faces. Except where there are strict ordinances, men and women risk life and limb crossing against traffic lights, dodging hurtling motor cars and giving a visitor only one emotion—expectation of an early death by a heart attack on seeing a catastrophe before his eyes! However, it is not for me to prescribe for them a little less speed, but I sometimes tell them this story:

"Shortly after the first New York subway was opened and that's a long time ago, certainly in the early part of this century, a group of Korean dignitaries visited New York. The subway then was a novelty. The Koreans happened to be in the same classification, so the city fathers took them in hand for official entertainment and the subway was selected for the high spot.

"The Koreans were bundled into a crowded local train at 34th or 33rd Street and Lexington Avenue (I never get my New York subway correct) and bundled out again at the first express stop, 14th Street. Then they were pushed and tugged into an express train which roared downtown toward City Hall, their utimate destination. When slightly distraught and overcome by the crowds and the commotion, they finally reached the street, the beaming chairman of the mayor's committee said to the chief Korean visitor:

"'I just want you to know that by leaving that local train and taking an express down here, we saved five and one-half minutes'.

"'Five and one-half minutes, eh' inquired the Korean gentleman gently. 'Five and one-half minutes . . . now just what are you going to do with them?'

"'Well, now that you put it that way,' replied the startled American, 'I'll be damned if I know!'"

As we have said in the past, fishing is no longer merely a dignified way of doing nothing. For the adult, it's a tonic for frayed nerves and an opportunity to gain a better perspective. For the kid, it contributes to physical and mental well-being, and toward a better future.

FAST, FATAL GETAWAY

Bandits don't have a monopoly on quick getaways. A mallard duck was banded on the Tennessee National Refuge on Tennessee-Kentucky Lake last November and killed just six days later near Port Arthur Texas!—*Kentucky Happy Hunting Ground.*

Studies of both the prairie chicken and the sharptail grouse indicate that the prairie chicken can maintain itself in small flocks in areas isolated from other prairie chickens. The sharptail population declines and vanishes unless there are continuous areas of extensive range.—E.S.

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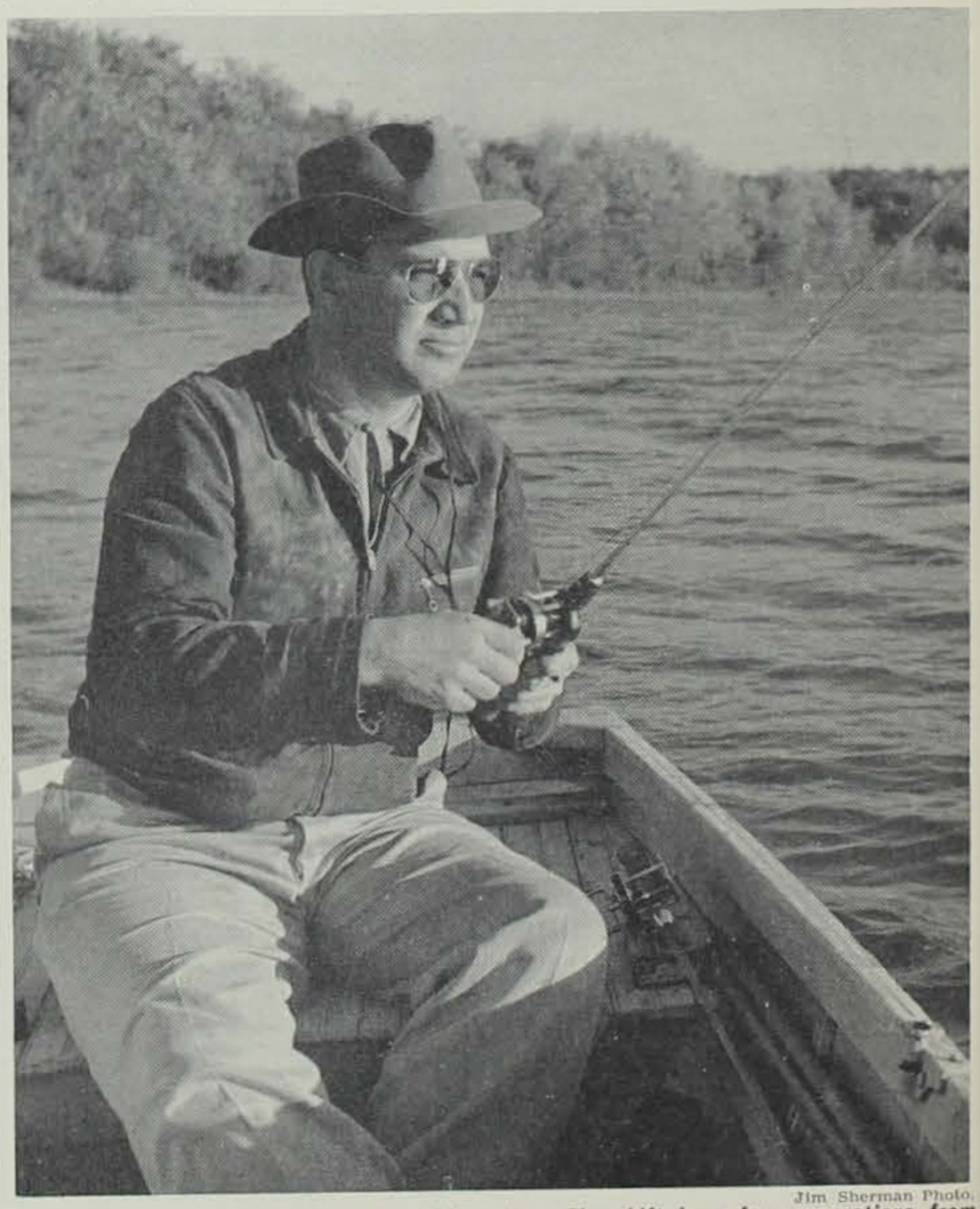

Jim Sherman Photo.

"Of course, we adults need to go fishing, too. The shift in a few generations from a "physical" to a "mental" way of life is taking its toll."

"The skunk which has a one-track mind signals with his tail. If he whirls his hind quarters, elevates his tail and stamps his feet, look out."

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ANIMAL TAILS

By David H. Thompson
And
Roberts Mann

Many animals, deprived of a tail, would appear as strange as a man without ears. Some would be helpless or greatly handicapped because, while the tail may seem merely ornamental, it usually has one or more important uses. On the other hand, for reasons hard to explain, many other kinds of animals have very short, apparently useless tails, and some have none at all.

A man has no tail, although he has a suggestion of one at the end of his spine, and the same is true of the gibbons and the great apes—chimpanzee, gorilla and orangutan. Manx cats from the Isle of Man, and the Schipperke—a Belgian breed of dog—have no tails at all. Although they live in trees, like monkeys, the sloths of Central and South America, and the lovable sleepy little Koala "bear" of Australia, have no tails—perhaps because they always move so slowly. Among the rodents — many of which have quite long or bushy tails—the guinea pig, the cavy and the giant capybara of South America have none.

The tails of crocodiles and alligators are formidable weapons used in swimming and to maim their enemies or prey. Many of the lizards leave their wriggling tails behind and escape when grabbed by that member because it breaks off very easily in the center of a vertebra. Mr. Lizard then grows a new one.

Some animals' tails are very expressive. A friendly dog wags his tail, or thumps it on the floor if spoken to while lying down. Wolves wag their tails when playing together. Our tabby cats twitch the tips of their tails from side to side when angry or tensed to spring on prey, just like lions, tigers, panthers and most felines. The white underside of the short triangular tail on a Virginia deer snaps upward and flashes like a signal flag as the animal bounds away in alarm. Cattle—like horses, asses and zebras—use their long plumed tails to accurately dislodge a biting fly but playful calves, or a stampeding herd of steers, hold their tails rigidly aloft when running at full speed—a comical sight.

The skunk, which has a one-track mind, signals with his tail. If he whirls his hindquarters toward you, elevates that bushy tail and stamps his front feet, back away pronto, because he's ready to accurately shoot a fine spray, from two glands at the base of the tail, that will blind you and make you unfit for human society. The peaceful porcupine backs into battle, lashing its tail like a medieval mace and driving the barbed loosely-attached quills into the face or body of its attacker. The possum's long muscular naked tail is prehensile and is wrapped around a branch of a tree feeding or used for carrying leaves to its nest. The flat trowel-shaped scaly tail of the beaver is *not* used as a trowel to carry mud but is used as a rudder and powerful propeller while swimming, especially when towing branches. It is used as a prop when cutting trees, and, in the water, to signal an alarm with a resounding thwack.

Many animals, such as fishes, whales and porpoises, birds, kangaroos, otters and muskrats, use their tails as an aid to locomotion. The sensitive tip on a mole's tail enables it to travel backward as fast as forward in its tunnel. The jumping mouse, for example, is unsteady and may fall over after a leap if, by accident, it has lost part of its tremendously long tail. Most New World monkeys use their prehensile tails like a fifth leg and hand. A squirrel uses its bushy tail as a plane and rudder when leaping through the air, and for other important purposes, so we wonder what will happen to one we saw, recently, that had only the stump of its trademark.

Tales, like tails, have an end. This is it.—*Forest Preserve District Cook County Bulletin.*

SPORTSMENS CLUBS GROW UP

Iowa sportsmen's clubs, a product of the Twentieth Century, and of modern fish and game environment, may be said to have grown up.

Those clubs which have survived to the present day, are here to stay, and they are able to justify their existence. Time was, and not too many years ago, that a sportsmen's group was organized chiefly for one purpose, namely, to chisel something out of the state conservation department.

The clubs in existence today are a far cry from those in being at the turn of the century. Today groups work with the State Conservation Department instead of against it. The present outlook is the long-range one. Not how much can be gained for today, but how good will hunting and fishing be tomorrow, and in the years ahead.

In Scott County we are fortunate in having a number of strong sportsmen's groups. The veteran Scott County Sportsmen's Association has a record of thousands of dollars spent for better fishing and hunting in the area, plus fine cooperation with the state conservation department.

The local chapter of the Iowa Coon Hunter's association always has its shoulder to the wheel, formerly stocking rabbits, staging fox hunts, releasing coon to the wild, working for better conditions in the fur-bearing division of things. The Ike Waltons, a revived group from an old chapter, presently make things hum with their enery. A broad multiflora planting program, with assistance to farmers, is one of the strong planks in the program of the Davenport chapter.

The Donahue group, chiefly residents of that area worked on an extensive pheasant stocking program for years, and many of the members of this club residing on farms have gone into a multiflora program for the pheasants, quail and rabbits.

All of these groups have but one goal in mind, to build a better outdoors on which the members depend for recreation. A most commendable undertaking and sufficient reason for existence.—*Davenport Democrat.*

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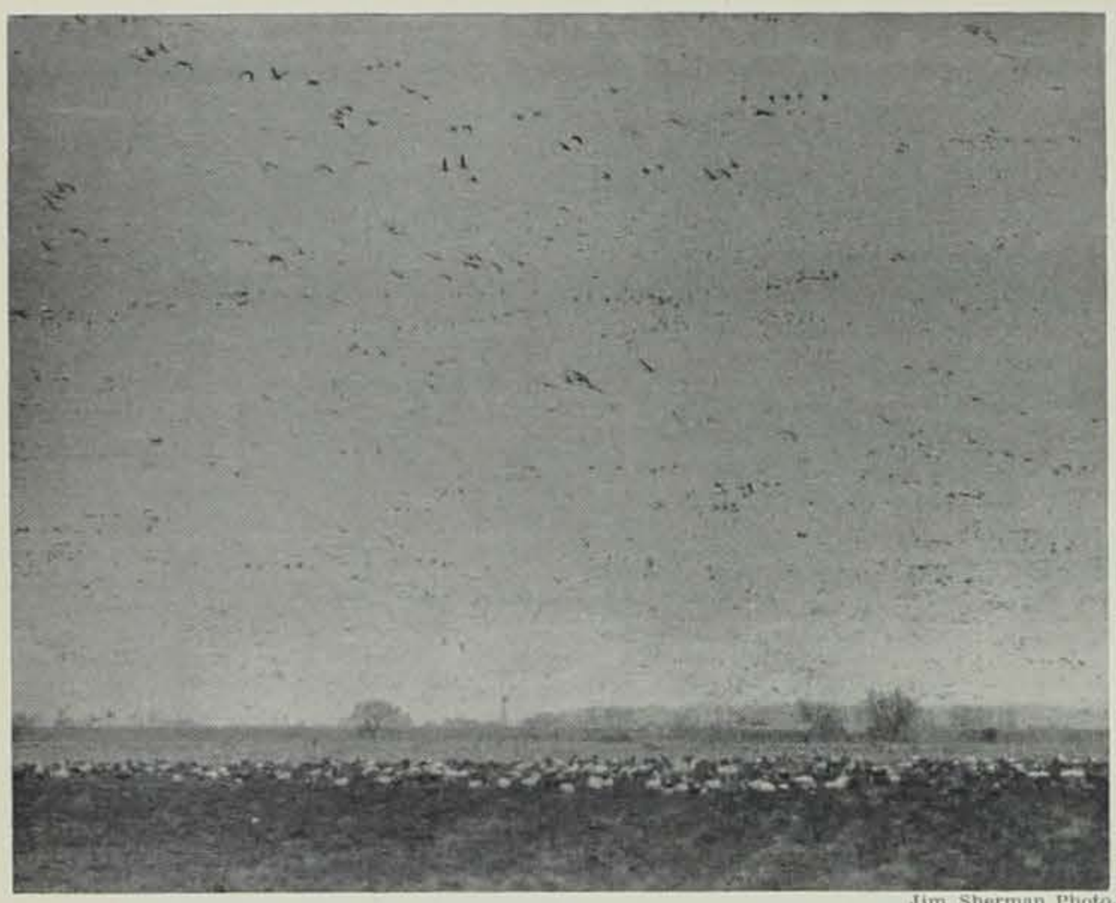
Jim Sherman Photo.

The old nursery rhyme says the pole cat has a bushy tail, the possums' tail is bare, the rabbit has no tail at all, except a little patch of hair.



Jim Sherman Photo.
Flocks of a hundred thousand blue and snow geese are not uncommon on the Missouri River bottoms. The birds feed on waste corn left by mechanical corn pickers.

Blue Geese . . .

(Continued from page 17)

By the middle of March their momentum was checked, for they could fly no faster than the seasons. They had left Louisiana in summer, flown through spring, and as they reached southern Iowa had caught up with the last of winter.

They rested there, the vanguards of spring, and the word of their arrival went out over the state. In southwestern Iowa the vast flocks of geese were piling up on the threshhold of winter, and men came to watch them in awe.

Around Forney's Lake, Kellogg Slough and the Green Bottoms and Lake Manawa south of Council Bluffs there were flocks of 100,000 blue and snow geese. In fields near Luton and Horseshoe Lake there were geese almost without number by the 20th of March, feeding on waste corn left the previous autumn by mechanical corn pickers. Men tried futilely to estimate their numbers and gave up.

A farmer, looking out over his fields of winter wheat, complained "It ain't their eating that I mind so much, but their doggone *stomping*!" In the river towns street lights attracting the birds were turned off to end the ceaseless clamor of circling geese. But by late March the last barriers of our winter had collapsed, and by the first of April the geese were gone from Iowa.

In April the flocks moved northward to Manitoba. One night in early May a Winnipeg policeman heard the beginning of their passing and knew it was finally spring. For nearly a week the great, scattered flocks passed near the city and disappeared into the northeast, where they were lost. For 700 miles no more was known of them. No man saw them again until a trapper north of James Bay looked up one early June morning and saw a skein of blue geese flying out over the pack of ice of Hudson's Bay. They were making for the reeking mud flats and barren tundra of Baffin and Southampton Islands. They nested there in the chilling rains of Mid-June, a little more than three months since their departure from Bayou Constance, 2,600 miles to the south.

The greater mass of snow geese split off from the blues and headed "beyond the north wind" to the arctic coast of Canada, some within 15° of the North Pole. Like the blue geese they nested in tundra in a deserted land more water than earth.

Far to the south the bluebills and ruddy ducks were just beginning to nest, and the nests of pintails and mallards were nearly a month old. The spring flight on the Mississippi flyway was over.

No man knows the reasons or mechanics of this journey, but many have pondered it. Some believe that the birds are following routes dictated to them by ancient ice caps. They think that the ice sheets of the glacial age drove all life before them, and birds moved north or south as the glaciers receded or advanced. These great racial movements may have become habits that remain unbroken today.

It is also thought that the northland may have been the old ancestral home of all birds, and that it was a fair, warm land in which birds could live all year. Perhaps that is why birds, still dreaming of a distant past, seek the old home ranges every spring.

Others believe that the ancestral home was in the south, by so many birds concentrated there that it was impossible for all of them to nest and feed. So, some of these birds began flying north in the spring to where there was less competition for food and space.

It is possible that birds move north because advancing seasons unlock their food supplies from the artic's deep-freeze. In turn, they are forced south when winter cuts off these rations. A few men have reflected that birds go north to avoid the many enemies of the southland, and seek safety for their nests and eggs in the tundra. But these are only conjectures, and no man knows the truth.

If these are the reasons *why* they fly north, what *causes* the birds to fly? Perhaps it is the lengthening of days and light conditions. It is known that an increase in daily light helps develop the sex organs of migrant birds. Some claim that it is not the light alone that speeds this development, but the exercise made possible by longer days. Remember the trial flights of the blue goose on his wintering grounds?

But the most baffling problem is this: once spurred to leave their wintering grounds, how do the birds find their way?

Some men simply attribute it to nature. However, nature would be the source of instinct, and not the mechanism of instinct. What is the mechanism that guides these unerring flights to the Foxe Basin, James Bay and Point Barrow? Many physicists and zoologists suspect that the inner ears of birds are sensitive to the magnetic lines of force sent out by the magnetic poles. They theorize, and have some evidence to back them up, that migratory birds have a sense of compass direction.

Another theory is that young birds are taught the old migration routes by adult birds. But if this is true, how does one account for the fact that some old and young birds migrate at different times? Nor can migratory instincts be laid to the remarkable vision of birds, or to memory, for landmarks along the way are often obscured by night, storms and fogs.

Like other natural puzzles, bird migration may never be solved. Any many men, although they wonder at the miracle of the flyways, do not really care for a solution. They only know that geese keep a tryst in the north when winter is over, and that is enough.

DRIED VENISON

The haunch of the deer is most suitable for drying and curing, which is recommended for old, heavy bucks.

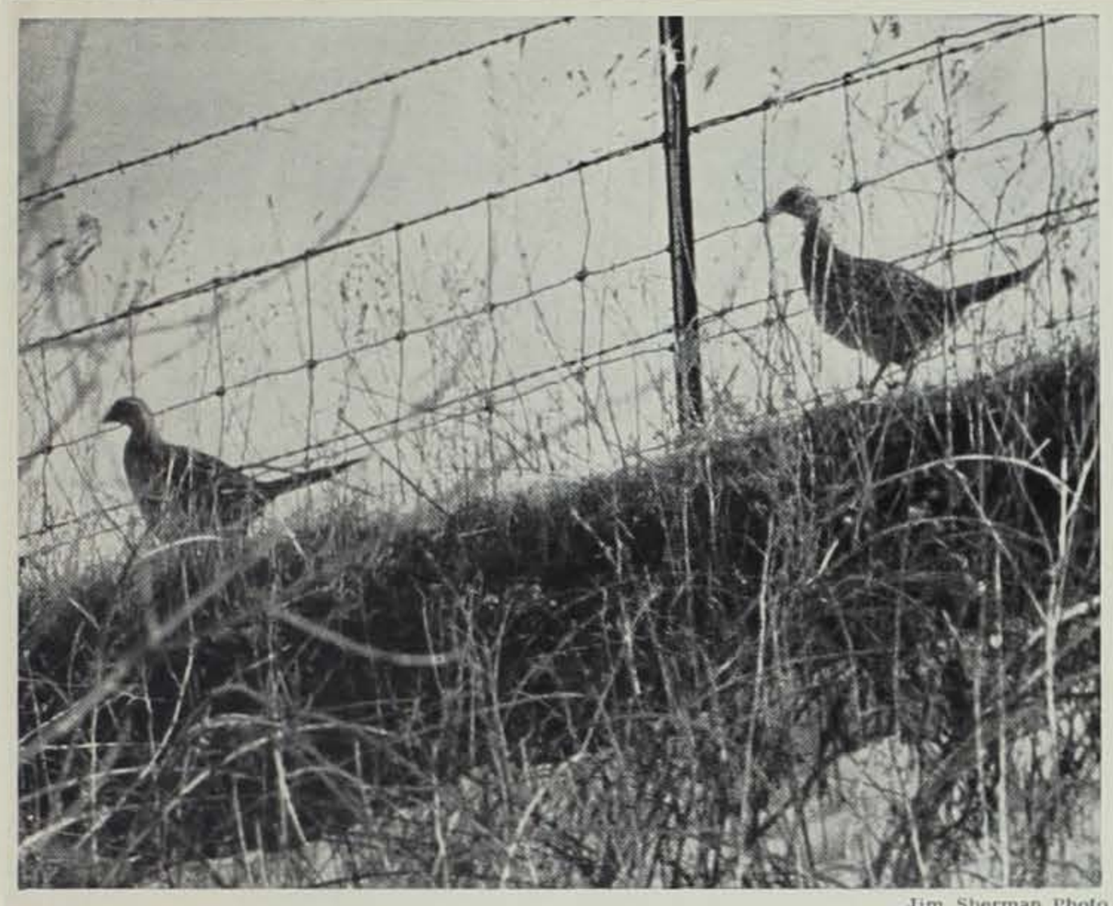
Remove the ham and separate it into "inside" and "outside" rounds and "round tips" by cutting along the muscle seams, thus separating the ham into three large bundles of muscle.

Cure these muscles of the round by rubbing with a mixture of three parts salt and one part granulated sugar for three consecutive times at three- to five-day intervals (depending on the time required for the meat to absorb the cure.)

Place the rubbed meat on a table or shelf in a cool cellar during the curing process, and at the end of four weeks brush off any remaining salt and hang the meat in a smokehouse and smoke it for three days. Hickory or apple wood makes a good smoke. Hang smoked venison in a dry place for a month or more to dry, then slice the same as dried beef.—*Pennsylvania State College.*

Each kind of bird has a peculiar flight that identifies the species. Upland plover flight is described as, "flying with the end of his wings." Wing tips of large birds such as vultures will bend visibly upward on the downbeat of the wing. And the vulture may be identified at great distances by the dihedral, the upsweep of which is much greater than in any common soaring bird in Iowa.—E.S.

Jim Sherman Photo.
No man knows the reasons or mechanics of migration but some believe that these bank swallows are following routes dictated to them by ancient ice caps.



Jim Sherman Photo.
"The most important weather factor influencing the roadside pheasant census was found to be the amount of dew on the morning the count was taken.

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Pheasant Counts . . .

(Continued from page 17)

A few states, including Iowa, have done some research into the influence these physical factors have on the roadside count. They found, among other things, that the amount of dewfall present had a significant effect on the number of pheasants seen along an early-morning census route. The difficulty was that nobody knew of any simple method for measuring dewfall. Such measurement terms as "light," "medium" and "heavy" dew did not have the same meaning to all workers.

Here is where our Palestine friends come into the picture. In the Middle East, an area of little rainfall, dew is of great importance as a source of moisture for cultivated crops. In the Bible there are passages praising dew and there are even special Hebrew prayers for dew in summer.

A scientist named S. Duvdevani and his assistants spent years trying to find a simple way for measuring dewfall without using a lot of complicated apparatus. They finally came up with an "optical method," based on the size, form and distribution of dew drops that collected during the night on a small wood block. These were compared with a series of numbered photographs showing different, known amounts of dew. The number of the photograph most resembling the dew deposit on the wood block was recorded by the observer as the amount of dew deposited during the night.

During the late summer and fall of 1952, one of these special Duvdevani dew gauges was used to measure the dew each morning in the Winnebago area.

The most important weather factor influencing the roadside pheasant census was found to be the amount of dew on the morning the count was taken. Though such factors as wind velocity, temperature, relative humidity, cloudiness and barometric pressure change had varying effects on the number of birds seen, it was actually not very important to measure these conditions. Any Iowa farmer who has walked to the back forty to get his milk cows through knee-high pasture every morning can tell you that the amount of dew on the grass depends on a combination of wind, temperature, cloudiness and other conditions existing during the night. Consequently, if a dew measurement is obtained, the other factors do not necessarily have to be measured.

With future roadside counts made in each county, it will be possible to adjust them all to a constant dew reading and obtain a more accurate estimate of the pheasant population. In the past, a change in pheasant population from one year to the next had to be 20 per cent or more to signify an up or down trend in populations. With the dew measurement method state biologists should be able to detect population changes more accurately.

Research into the daily timing of the fall roadside census revealed that the counts should be started at the same time with respect to sunrise each morning. If this is done, it is not necessary to correct for the fact that the number of pheasants seen decreases at a steady rate soon after sunrise. Starting the count at a set time by the clock is not satisfactory.

Analysis of changing cover conditions and counts made from August through October showed that August is the best time for taking an Iowa roadside census. In recent years counts have usually been conducted in late September and early October. If the counts are made in August, the results will be available to administrators sooner, and can be given longer and more careful consideration before pheasant seasons and bag limits are set.

As a result of the knowledge gained from this investigation, the Iowa State Conservation Commission will be able to determine more accurately the status of our pheasants: how many are available and how long and hard they can be hunted without endangering future production.

Conservation has been defined as the "wise use of our natural resources." The fall roadside census is a modern, scientific game management tool that will help in the wise use of one of Iowa's favorite wildlife resources: wily Mr. Ringneck.

GOOD NEWS FOR SPORTSMEN

Sportsmen, we feel certain, were pleased with the announcement that the Iowa Conservation Commission has moved forward with its plan for improvement of the Lake Odessa area in Louisa County as a public recreation area . . . particularly those who are followers of the sports of fishing and duck hunting.

For an extended period now, sportsmen have been pressing for action which would improve the region, which is under administration of the Iowa Conservation Commission.

A contract has been let for installation of pipes and valves designed to control the water level in the lake and repairs to a levee which gave way back in the spring of 1951 when the Mississippi River was on a rampage, plus some excavation.

The contractor is expected to get under way some time soon on the undertaking, and with a 250-day completion time specied, there's a chance indicated that before the year ends, sportsmen hereabouts may get a chance to enjoy the improved facilities.

Ultimate development of the 3,000 or so acres in the tract, it is understood, includes some other work, such as improvements to the access road, some tree and brush removal from waters in the west side of the main lake, and a boat dock.

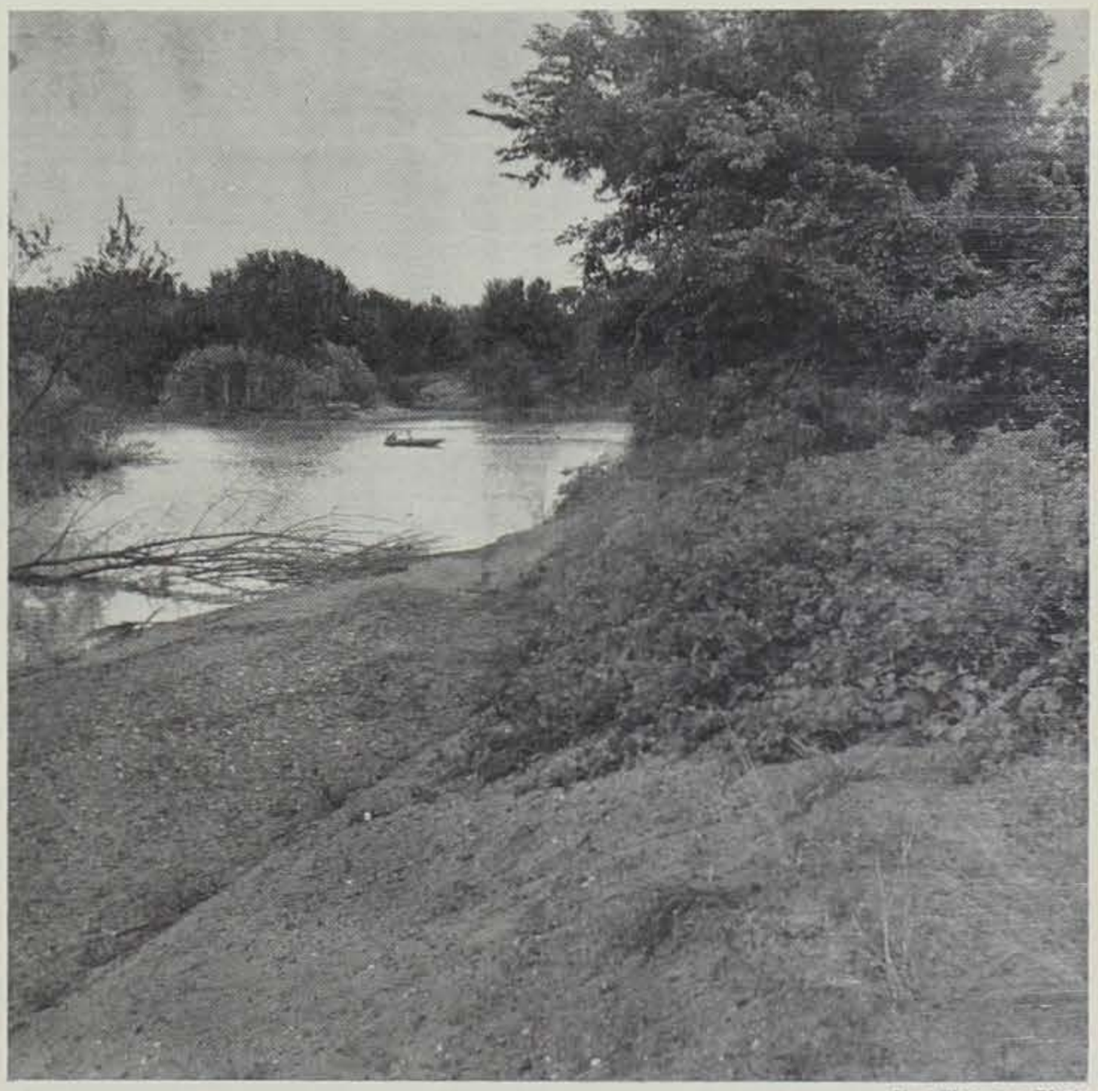
When this will come about is not yet known—but will undoubtedly follow as the area comes into wider use, as it undoubtedly will.

The current improvements, at a contract figure of slightly more than $99,000, are being met from funds available to the state from the tax levy upon guns and ammunition . . . a dividend upon such payments in future enjoyment.

Many sports and civic-minded individuals have had a hand in keeping the Lake Odessa project alive and bringing it to its present state of development and in getting the state interested in the preservation and improvement of the area.

Present and future generations of fishermen, hunters and others who like to wet a line, draw a bead upon a mallard or just get out in the open, will doubtless express their thanks that through this action, another recreation area was preserved for their use.—*Muscatine Journal.*

If disturbed at the proper time, Canada geese can be dangerous. Several years ago a Canadian landowner was riding horseback over his farm when he surprised two nesting geese at one of his ponds. As the horse accidentally stepped on their nest, both geese began making powerdives at horse and rider. Although the rider bent low over the horse's neck, one of the geese struck him hard enough to break several ribs and knock him from the saddle.—J. M.



Jim Sherman Photo.
Contracts have been let for Lake Odessa control structures. Repairs will be made to the levee which gave way in the spring of 1951.

Jim Sherman Photo.

This carp trap at Lost Island Lake is one of thirty permanent rough fish traps designed to reduce competition for game fish.

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Fisheries Program . . .

(Continued from page 17)

lows biological recommendations for each body of water.

Alternate-year walleye fry stocking will be continued on an experimental basis. Further studies will be made this spring on stream conditions during the walleye's hatching period to determine if high, muddy water is the limiting factor in stream walleye production.

About 700 acres of shallow, "freeze-out" lakes will be stocked with walleyed pike fry which will be allowed to grow throughout the summer before being seined and transplanted as fingerling in the major waters of the state. Over 300,000 fingerling walleyes, ranging in length from five to nine inches, were produced in these freeze-out lakes during 1953, where they had little competition because of the severe 1952-53 winter kill of other fish. Since competition may be much heavier in 1954, a production of about 100,000 fingerlings is expected.

In 1954 two drained lakes will be refilled and stocked with suitable fish species. In all other waters stocking will be limited to predator species. Where over-abundance and slow growth are found fish populations will be thinned.

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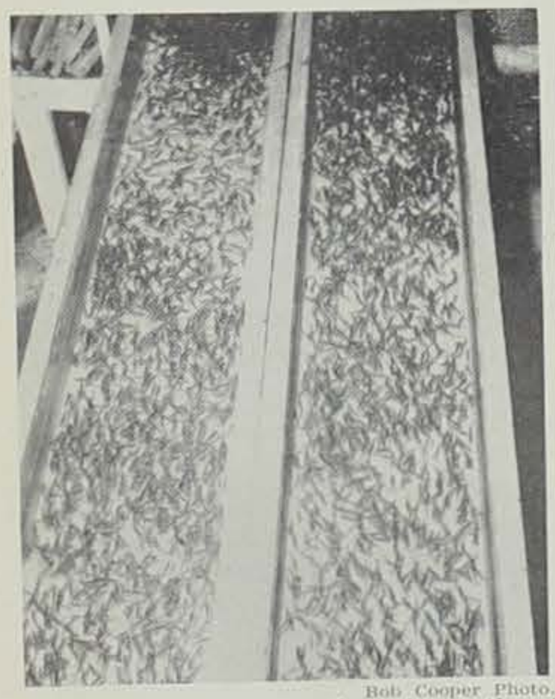

Bob Cooper Photo.

Fish management operations in northeast Iowa will be largely concerned with trout and smallmouth bass. Troughs of newly hatched trout in the Decorah Hatchery.

Fish management operations in Northeast Iowa will be largely concerned with trout and smallmouth bass hatching, rearing and distribution. Small-mouth hatching and rearing is carried on as insurance against failure of natural reproduction. Flash floods or sudden drops in water temperatures often cause almost complete loss of smallmouth bass fry, so an effort is made to speed up recovery of the stream by artificial methods. In years of good natural reproduction in the better smallmouth streams the productions of the Decorah hatchery is distributed to the marginal streams where natural reproduction is the limiting factor.

Rainbow, brown, and brook trout are found in 46 spring-fed streams of northeast Iowa. They are present in fishable numbers because the Decorah and Backbone hatcheries rear and stock in excess of 150,000 each year.

In 1954 the Mississippi River is expected to produce ten million walleyed pike eggs and a million northern pike eggs, plus any adult game and panfish needed for freeze-out lakes or stocking new waters.

The almost complete absence of rock or gravel rules out the "clear-water" species in most of southern Iowa, where the waters are heavy with silt. However, these waters do provide good to excellent fishing if proper species have been introduced.

Southern Iowa hatcheries are equipped to provide seed stocks for these waters and to stock new artificial lakes and farm ponds with largemouth bass, bluegills and crappie. This year's fisheries operations will be confined to stocking of the predator species (largemouth bass) in the existing lakes and a combination of predator and forage-type fish in the new lakes, reservoirs or farm ponds. Drought conditions now prevalent in the area have seriously reduced water levels in many impoundments.

A continuation of the drought will further lower water levels, crowding fish populations and producing better than average fishing because of a concentration of catchable sized fish. On the other hand, rainfall may refill the reservoirs creating an expanded environment in which fishing is normally good. In either case, some species management may be necessary and attempts will be made to control over-production of panfish as situations develop. This will be done either by actual removal of stunted panfish with net or seine or by attempting to control young-of-the-year production by introduction of largemouth bass.

Species control in southern Iowa waters is occasionally necessary for excess populations of stunted yellow bass, crappies or bluegills. Seining is not effective because of the shape of the reservoirs, tree stumps in the bottom and other debris. Pond netting or partial poisoning appears to be the only way of controlling these fishes.

Experimental catfish stocking was carried on during 1953 and will not be repeated in 1954. However, careful checks of impoundments stocked with catfish will be made so that we can be sure of correct future management procedures. Natural catfish reproduction is normally more than sufficient for suitable southern Iowa streams. During 1954 bullheads will be stocked in many of the reservoirs and artificial lakes of southern Iowa, thus, providing additional angling recreation.

Special attempts will be made this year to improve the pan-fishing knowledge of local fishermen, Fishing schools will be organized to demonstrate the use of tackle, bait, and lures which most effectively take these species. Harvest of surplus fishes can be an effective fish management tool only if numbers of panfishermen and know-how are increased.

Wardens Tales . . .

(Continued from page 19)

saw a man in the front seat holding a gun with the barrel up, evidently watching for birds along the ditch. The driver knew the side roads well, and drove carefully beside good pheasant cover.

When the car finally drove into Rake, Floyd figured it was about time to check the car and its passengers. However, the car pulled up before a church and its well-dressed driver got out before Floyd could speak to him. It's just as well he didn't. The passenger in the "hunting cap" was the man's wife, and her "gun" was a wedding cake with a black bridegroom standing on it. The couple had evidently slowed down in the low, rough spots of the road to avoid shaking the cake.

Floyd writes that he didn't press the point further, but had a notion to go to the wedding and apologize for his suspicions.

During the duck season, *Boone News-Republican* ran a story and picture of three happy goose hunters who had filled their limits of Canada geese near Maxwell. One of the hunters was Warren Wilson, conservation officer for Boone and Story counties.

Warren was besieged with congratulatory phone calls and was a local hero until a friend (?) ran the following want ad in the next issue of the paper:

LOST: 6 Canadian geese near Maxwell. Will not prosecute if returned. Identity known.

This want ad *was* just a joke, wasn't it, Warren?

Barnyard pigeons come in readily to decoys, and fine shooting can be had over cardboard pigeon silhouettes to which pigeon wings have been tied in a natural position.—E.S.

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Bob Cooper Photo.

Walleyed pike fry stocking from the Spirit Lake Hatchery is general in the open water lakes region following recommendations for each body of water.